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MATEBIAN NEWS

PRESS CLIPPINGS
"Death of a Nation - The Timor Conspiracy"

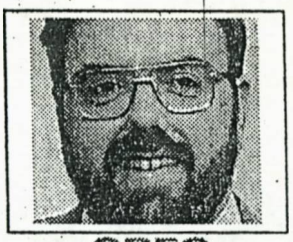
February '94

Compiled by Matebian News/East Timor Information & Documentation Centre/CNRM
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OPINION

EDITED BY BERNARD LANE



GREG
SHERIDAN

WHICH country has had most impact on Australia's development since World War II? The United States? Japan? Britain? Mark yourself down as a dunce in international relations if you picked any of the above. The correct answer is Indonesia.

The case for Indonesia is simple. In the early 1960s what is now the world's fourth most populous State, and the most populous Muslim State, was led by the increasingly erratic, ultra-nationalist president Achmed Sukarno. The charismatic Sukarno based much of his appeal on rousing nationalist passion and decrying the West. Indonesia was engaged in military confrontation with the newly formed State of Malaysia, which brought it into direct if sporadic military conflict with Australia. In the PKI it had one of the largest communist parties in the world. The PKI and the army were locked in a bitter struggle for supremacy.

If Indonesia had gone communist, or even if it had descended into pathological, Balkans-style ethnic conflict, both of which were real possibilities in the early 1960s, the results for Australia would have been catastrophic. In the former case, a communist Indonesia would have spread subversion throughout South-East Asia, through Thailand, Malaysia, The Philippines and even Singapore, just as China tried to do from further away. Coping with a communist Indonesia all through the Cold War would have been a terrible burden for Australia.

In the latter scenario, Balkanisation, we might easily have had a million refugees to deal with. The results for Australia in either case would have been profound and would have greatly affected the way we developed. We would probably have become much more inward-looking, isolated and xenophobic, developing a South Africa-style laager mentality in which for much longer we would have seen all of Asia as a huge threat rather than, as now, an economic opportunity.

The continued importance of Indonesia can be demonstrated by thinking about the consequences if things went wrong in reasonably possible ways. A political crisis in Britain, Germany or Italy would be of compelling interest but have little immediate effect on Australia. A real political crisis in Indonesia could immediately cause drastic change in our national policy and behaviour.

As it turned out, Indonesia went neither communist nor Balkan but got the New Order Government of President Suharto, which, for all its faults, has produced sustained economic development, racial and religious tolerance, an increasingly open society and a benign strategic environment for Australia.

Unfortunately, these basic truths about Australia's national interests rarely inform the national debate. Nowhere is this more distressingly true than in the report of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade on Australia's Relations With Indonesia.

That the committee produced a 300-page report on this subject at all is, of course, commendable. It is drearily written with sentence construction at times so opaque as to be impenetrable. Much of it seems to be based on unnecessarily dated information. Nonetheless, a good deal of the report is a reasonably accurate, bland primer on Indonesia.

Given the number of submissions it got from groups hostile to Indonesia, the committee's report makes a laudable effort to remain sensible and mainstream. Many of its recommendations are sensible enough, such as that Australia should immediately open a consulate in Surabaya. (If the Department of Foreign Affairs had its druthers we would open immediately in Surabaya in Indonesia and Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam, two of Asia's boom towns.)

The report also sensibly suggests we offer what technical assitance we can to Indonesia's nuclear energy program, while also impressing on Jakarta our concerns about the safety issues and the consequences any accident would have for northern Australia. This is the committee acting sensibly, accepting that the nuclear energy program is inevitable and trying to get Australia constructively involved. The committee does not, however, acknowledge that Indonesia's nuclear program was greatly stimulated by Australia's purchase of F-111 bombers with nuclear triggers.

The greatest failure of the report is its lack of a vision of how intimately Australia's interests are bound up with those of Indonesia, and its muddled and foolish treatment of issues such as East Timor and human rights. For example, the report blandly declares that "at least 200,000 East Timorese have died from causes directly or indirectly attributable to integration by Indonesia".

This figure is ridiculous. It represents massive propaganda inflation by the anti-Indonesia lobby of anything reliably known about East Timor. It was based originally on extremely dubious demographic research and is a subject, at least, of great controversy among anyone who has se-

> "Report foolishly muddled on East Timor and human rights"

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When our vision of Indonesia loses sight of the truth

riously looked at the issue. But the committee simply states it blandly as fact.

Similarly, in explicitly and fairly contemptuously rejecting last year's influential Bangkok Declaration on Human Rights the report demonstrates only the crudest grasp of the arguments about the relationship between economic development and political and human rights.

For instance, the report says Indonesia is proud of its ability to change but then goes on to say: "This change is primarily economic, one which, if the Bangkok Declaration is any guide to Indonesia's thinking, precludes any development in human rights until some unquantified economic progress has been achieved."

This is an absurd caricature of the view, widely held throughout East Asia, that political development proceeds at best slowly and gradually, differently in different cultures, and hand in hand with economic development.

The report keeps stating that universal human rights must be universal but then seems to totally confuse basic human rights with broader political rights, even with particular forms of constitutional and political organisation. They are not the same thing.

Throughout the many decades when Britain ruled Hong Kong, for example, before its 1984 agreement with China to hand Hong Kong back, its citizens had few political rights. Certainly there was no whiff of democracy. Yet it would be farcical to say their basic human rights were not respected. There can be formal democracy, as in Bangladesh and The Philippines, at the same time as gross human rights violations persist, or there can be fairly limited democracy, as in Hong Kong or Singapore, but no serious violations of basic human rights.

That is not to deny that representative democracy is an ideal we should promote. But it is to demonstrate that political rights and basic human rights are different things. By failing to offer any distinction between these in a generally muddled section on human rights the committee's report is likely to add to confusion.

Similarly, making the unrealistic demand that we be allowed to reopen a consulate in East Timor, the only purpose of which could be to criticise Indonesia, is simply not constructive, realistic or intelligent.

Still, this report could have been a lot worse. And for such small mercies, many thanks.

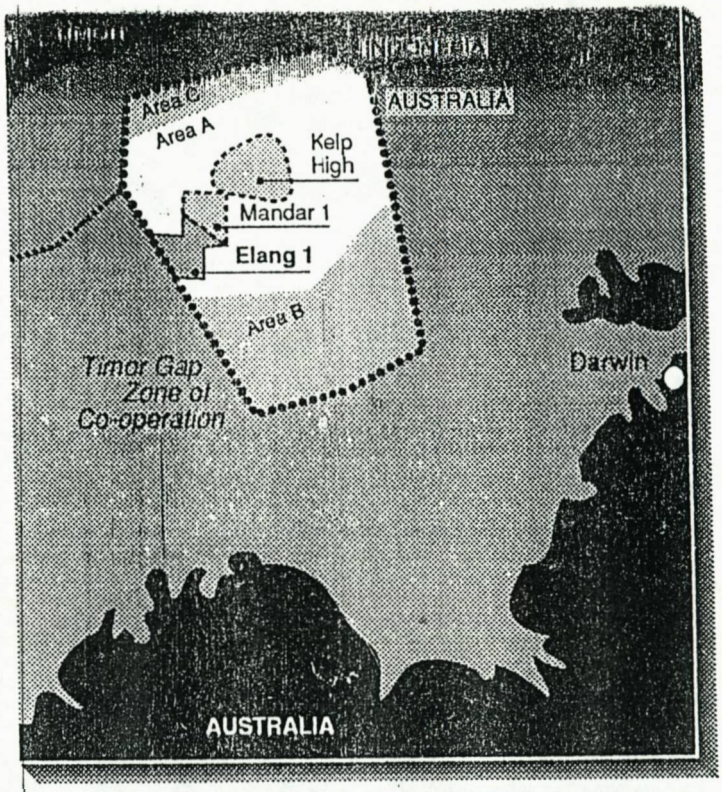
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BUSINESS AGE

THURSDAY 17 FEBRUARY 1994 **THE AGE**

Petroz hits oil in Timor well

By BARRY FitzGERALD, resources writer



Excitement rippled through the oil exploration industry yesterday on news that Petroz and its partners had made an oil discovery with their Elang 1 well in the Timor Sea zone of cooperation with Indonesia.

The well is the first in the area to flow oil, re-establishing the region after some earlier disappointments as an oil frontier worthy of the huge exploration effort planned.

Petroz reported that the well in ZOCA 91-12 had flowed light oil at a daily rate of 830 barrels with associated gas from a nine-metre interval from 3006.5 metres to 3015.5 metres.

The test was through a comparatively small six millimetre choke, a deliberate decision by Petroz to aid assessment of the gas to oil ratio (600 cubic feet of gas a barrel of oil) in the flow.

Increasing the choke size to the more usual half an inch should see a substantial increase in the flow rate, with about 3000 barrels-a-day the expectation.

But before that, a second and lower zone in the well will be tested.

The managing director of Petroz, Mr Rod Brown, said yesterday the oil flow from Elang was a great result. The sharemarket agreed, bumping Petroz 22 cents higher to 77 cents.

"We think that it dispels the fairly widely speculated theory that the region is gas prone and lacks suitable reservoir development to produce liquid hydrocarbons," Mr Brown said.

Analysts said Elang 1 was one of four priority targets in the permit which had the potential to contain upwards of 100 million barrels of oil.

Partners in the Elang 1 are Petroz (operator and 14.948 per cent), BHP Petroleum (42.417 per cent), Inpex Sahul (21.209 per cent) and Santos (21.426 per cent).

BHP's involvement was a source of embarrassment to the company yesterday when the Australian Stock Exchange halted trade in the market leader for 40 minutes in the morning session pending release of the report from Petroz.

"The action was taken at the exchange's initiative as a procedural arrangement without consultation with the company," BHP said last night.

Even though the find has caught the sharemarket's imagination, BHP's 10 cent gain to $18.38 was more a general market move than a response to the Elang 1 result. Santos, which needs a decent oil discovery more than most, gained 27 cents to $4.30.

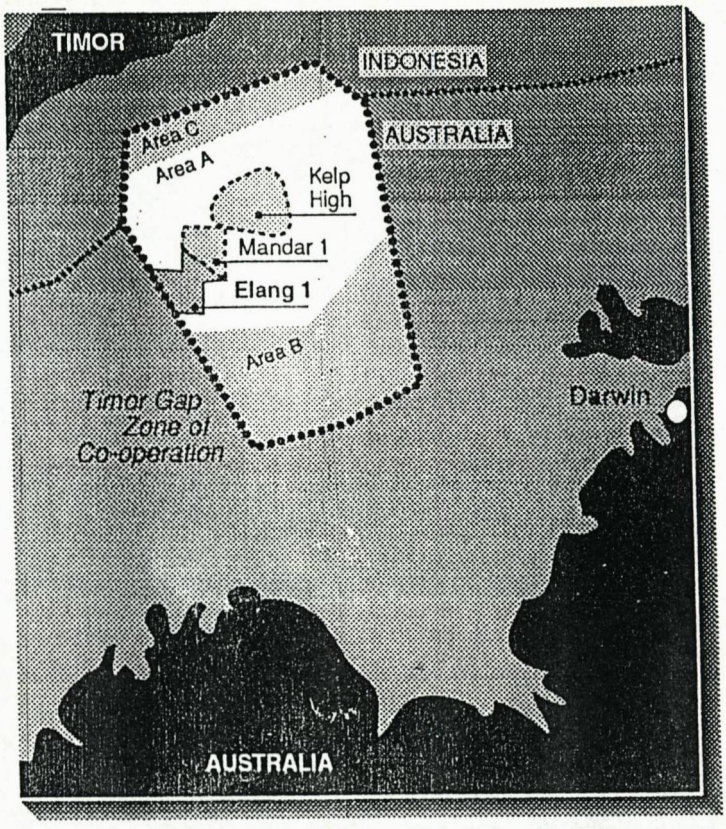
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Petroz find a 'company maker'

By TANIA HUDSON

A SMALL Queensland company has struck oil in the Timor Sea in a major discovery that analysts have described as one of the most exciting in recent years.

Petroz NL, a Brisbane-based oil and gas explorer, yesterday announced that exploration of the Elang-1 well in the Timor Zone of Co-operation had flowed oil at the rate of 830 barrels per day.

Analysts said the well had the potential to flow up to 4000 barrels per day once further testing was completed, and the recoverable reserve of the site was in excess of 50 million barrels.

'Given the fact that Australia's total oil production is around 150,000 barrels a day, this is pretty exciting stuff,' one analyst said.

Petroz managing director Rod Brown said the engineers had deliberately flowed the oil slowly through a narrow 6mm choke over 12 hours to assess the nature of the substance.

He said that once the oil was flowed through a wider choke, volumes would increase substantially.

Wilson HTM analyst Rob Burcher said the find could be a "company maker" for Petroz, which partners BHP, Santos and Inpex Sahul in the zone, ZOCA 91-12, 450 km north-west of Darwin.

"This is a very major discovery," Mr Burcher said.

"What makes it better is that the quality of the oil is very good: it's a light crude oil, which is very valuable."

Mr Burcher said the discovery greatly increased the value of Petroz' other acreages.

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THE AGE

THE AGE SATURDAY 12 FEBRUARY 1994

Second Dili massacre claimed

By MARK BAKER,
Canberra

Survivors of the November 1991 Dili massacre have given dramatic details of a second round of killing in which scores of captured demonstrators were stabbed, poisoned or crushed to death at an Indonesian military hospital.

A student who was arrested after troops fired on the initial peaceful protest march in the East Timor capital — killing at least 50 people — said he was beaten unconscious by soldiers, loaded on to a truck and taken to the hospital.

After he was dumped in a mortuary room "piled high" with dead and injured prisoners, two men moved through the room crushing the skulls of survivors with a large rock and forcing others to swallow poison tablets. The student said he escaped after pretending to be a police collaborator.

A laboratory technician working at the hospital said 10 military trucks had arrived loaded with dead and wounded prisoners. When some of the wounded jumped down, the trucks drove over them, crushing them to death.

The technician said he was later ordered to supply tablets of the poison paraformaldehyde which soldiers then forced wounded prisoners to swallow.

"After they were killed, they... separated them into groups of tens, wrapped them into a white sheet and took them to a dump," he said.

Details of the atrocities, which are certain to spark a renewed international outcry over Indonesia's conduct in East Timor, were gathered by a British journalist, Max Stahl. Stahl, who smuggled out a videotape of the Dili massacre later seen throughout the world, returned secretly last year and interviewed witnesses to the hospital killings. A documentary including his findings will be broadcast in Britain on 22 February.

Based on the testimony and other information, Stahl believes between 50 and 200 of those who were alive when brought to the hospital were killed.

Indonesia has acknowledged 66 "disappeared persons" but United Nations agencies list 207 people as missing.

PAGE 10: MPs visit Xanana in Jakarta

PAGE 22: New tales of death flourish

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Scene from a massacre: A boy in Santa Cruz cemetery is comforted after being stabbed five times by Indonesian soldiers.

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NEWS EXTRA

New tales of death flourish in East Timor's bloody soil

In November 1991, Indonesian security forces opened fire on a peaceful protest march in the East Timor capital, Dili, killing at least 50 people. **Max Stahl**, a British journalist whose secret videotape helped expose the massacre, recently returned to East Timor and found evidence that scores of people taken away by the military were later executed.

ABILIO is now 24. He was in his last year of high school when he joined the demonstration of 12 November 1991. He survived the first fusillade by diving behind a tree. "After shooting into the crowd, the soldiers advanced, telling all those not wounded to stand up. Those who did were cut down with knives," he says.

I filmed one boy with blood pouring from his stomach. On my return, I spoke to him. His was the first of several corroborations of Abilio's testimony. He had been stabbed five times after he obeyed the order to stand up. Two of his wounds were within centimetres of the heart.

But Abilio stayed down. "I had no wounds, so . . . they used a gun to beat me . . . to my head and made a hole . . . they beat me until I fainted, until they thought I was dead."

He was thrown into a Mercedes truck "full of dead bodies". He came to and played dead as the truck arrived at the Wiru Husada military hospital. "I was conscious, even though wounded, but I tried to concentrate. Two of them got out first and said 'anyone still alive come down so we can treat you'. One or two wounded colleagues in the back of the Mercedes got out first, but were stabbed by the Indonesians ... so I continued to play dead."

Abilio says that in the mortuary, he was stacked together with the dead bodies on a table. It was a room about four metres by eight metres, "piled high with dead bodies, ... up to 100 or more maybe ... like a carload of sand". Many were still alive and shouted for water.

"I saw two guys come in. One had striped shorts with socks. The one with shorts and socks was holding a rock as big as this, a huge rock ... used for building houses. Another fellow was holding medicine in a plastic jar.

"Colleagues that were badly wounded lay there screaming ... he threw that rock on their heads, just once, and if they continued alive, he threw it again, at their chest ... It made a loud noise ... it sounded like cracking coconuts as they fall from a tree to the ground. So loud! But I pretended to sleep and watched with the corner of my eyes."

Abilio says that while one threw the rock, the other started giving out tablets to the living. He gave out five or six at a time, "a big white tablet that has a strong acidic smell ... Those who took the tablets ... I never saw them again".

Abilio says he talked his way out, claiming he was a police informer sent to spy on the demonstators, but not before he had taken two pills. He vomited on his way out after they gave him a "strong burning sensation".

Jose, now 24, a laboratory technician, was on duty at the Wiru Husada No. 4 military hospital,

Continued: Next page.

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NEWS EXTRA
SATURDAY 12 FEBRUARY 1994 THE AGE

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'After shooting into the crowd, the soldiers advanced, telling all those not wounded to stand up. Those who did were cut down with knives.'

From Page 22

close to the morgue entrance. We talked in secret in a house in Dili at night: "Mercedes and Indonesian Hino military trucks began arriving loaded with dead and wounded . . . 10 trucks in all," he said.

According to Jose, there were up to 800 men from three battalions — the military police, the police and the local battalion 745 — surrounding the hospital, ensuring that no unauthorised people could get in or out.

"They just dumped (the wounded) down ... some were frightened and they stood up, so orders were given to run them over. That Hino truck just ran them over.

"But those that did not die, ... the Indonesians wanted to kill them but did not have the courage". So "soldiers came into the laboratory and asked me for some poison that would kill people quickly". Jose said there was only sulphuric acid but that was "very hot, and it would make the people scream if they injected it and the Indonesians were worried about that".

"So they brought over the pills. . . . Even if slightly wounded only, the victims sit down, their breath gets harder and harder, and die slowly, after about 15 minutes maximum."

After they were killed, their shoes, clothes and hats were taken off. The bodies were wrapped in sheets an taken to a dump.

Jose estimated the total of dead and dying brought to the hospital at up to 300. He said that throughout the hospital director, whom he named as Dr Nyoman Winyata, and a junior doctor on six months' national service, Dr Banbang, were at the hospital, supervising proceedings.

Some pills were left in the lab after the killings. I brought them out for analysis at London's metropolitan police forensic science laboratories. They consisted of 600 milligrams of paraformaldehyde, an extremely powerful disinfecting fumigant, described as "fatal to living matter in all forms".

"I would never give it to a patient in any circumstances," says neurobiologist Dr Harold Hillman, a member of the Amnesty medical group.

If swallowed, says Dr Jonathan Caplan, a doctor with experience of investigating poisons, such a pill would be "dramatically poisonous". "And the symptoms (Jose and Abilio described) are appropriate to what you'd expect."

Its effects would include burning of the throat and stomach, dizziness, lethargy, staggering (Jose described those "even slightly wounded, immediately sitting down") and coma. The body would become extremely acid and respond by hyperventilating (the hard breathing Joao described). Death would be by "circulatory collapse", a form of heart attack.

A large dose, 28 grams or more would normally be fatal, but not normally the five or six pills (three grams) that Jose observed. However, it is clear that people already weak and in a state of shock from loss of blood are not normal and would be far more vulnerable.

These pills were regarded in the hospital as "lethal poison", says a nurse, Joaquin Gusmao, 57, who worked in East Timor's military hospital for three years under Indonesian rule.

INDONESIA has always denied that more people were killed after the initial shooting, which they said was an isolated action by "soldiers out of control ... reacting to a riot". This is contradicted by the evidence of independent witnesses who testified that soldiers opened fire without provocation.

Last year, the UN Commission on Human Rights voted to condemn Indonesia, largely because of its failure to complete the next stages of a promised investigation into the fate of those unaccount-

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ed for after the massacre.

Indonesian authorities have never explained what happened to 207 "missing" demonstrators included in a list submitted to Indonesia by the UN after the massacre. This is part of a larger list of 273 names of dead or missing feared dead put together from information provided by the Catholic Church and the East Timorese resistance which carried out two exhaustive surveys in December 1991 and January 1992.

After a year, just 22 replies were received from Indonesia and only eight deemed relevant by the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.

When I returned secretly to East Timor late last year, I sought to corroborate the testimony of the witnesses with case evidence. I took the case of a school teacher from a town not far from the capital. His name is Tomas, and he appears on both UN lists of 207 and Indonesian lists of 66 "disappeared persons".

Tomas came and sat next to me inside the Santa Cruz cemetery as the Indonesians closed the ring around the demonstrators after the shooting on 12 November 1991. I filmed him in the context of the Indonesian "operation".

The police told relatives he had never been arrested. My videotape shows that Tomas must have been arrested. When I filmed him next to me, the cemetery was completely surrounded and the shooting had ceased. The Indonesian soldiers and police were methodically closing the ring to arrest all those inside.

Even had there been the slightest chance of escape, Tomas could not have taken it. He had a wound in a leg. He had stopped to bind it with a handkerchief. He could barely hop, and the cemetery was enclosed by a 180-centimetre wall.

He was reportedly seen again in the military hospital where all the wounded were taken. After that he was never seen again.

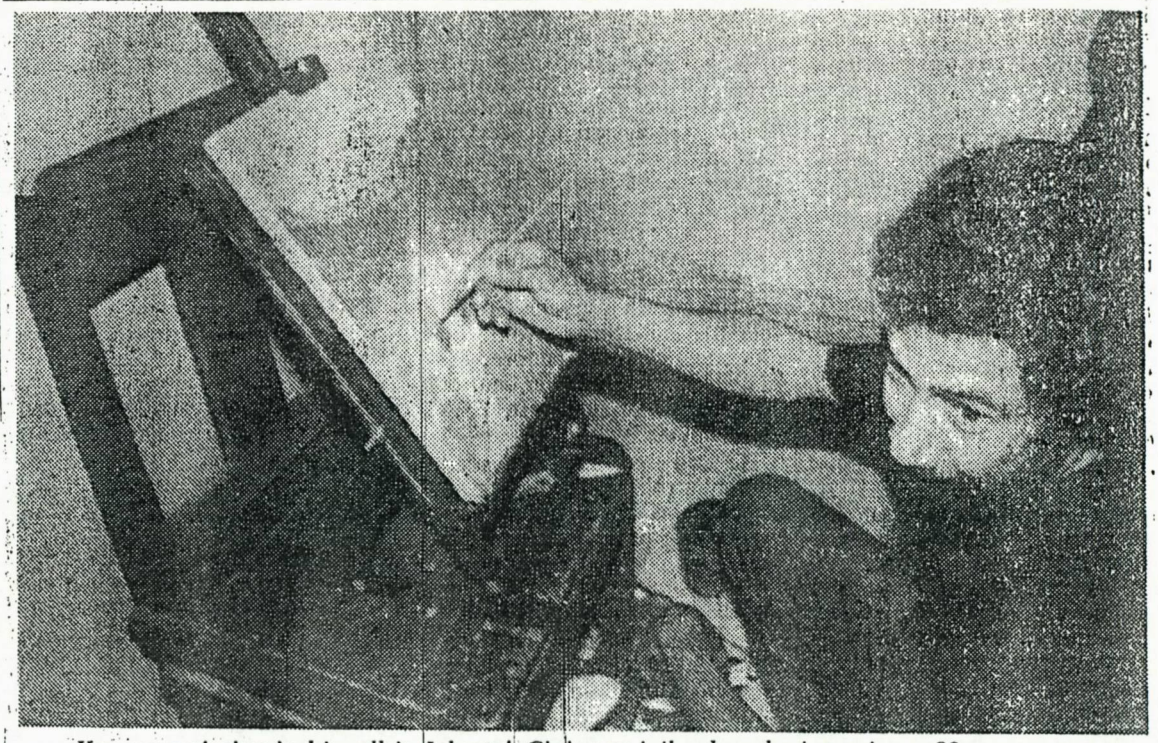
Fear surrounded his case and that of others who had disappeared. His family, I was told by close friends, had been warned not to speak. I was told "they, like all families with relatives among those killed at Santa Cruz, were being persecuted and threatened".

I contacted the wife of another man who disappeared at night in a poor house on the outskirts of Dili. Her husband's professional state pension was to be cut off, Indonesian authorities told her, because, "he had not worked for Indonesia". Like Tomas, he was a political activist for independence.

● *The pseudonymns Abilio and Jose have been used at the request of the two witnesses.*

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THE AGE SATURDAY 12 FEBRUARY 1994



Xanana painting in his cell in Jakarta's Cipinang jail, where he is serving a 20-year sentence.

MPs visit Xanana in Jakarta jail

Jakarta, Friday

Several MPs visited jailed East Timorese pro-independence leader Xanana Gusmao today, a day after Indonesian authorities restored his visiting rights, a television report said.

The state-run television station Televisi Republik Indonesia showed one of the MPs, Mr Suhardi, speaking to journalists after visiting Xanana in his jail in Cipinang, east of here.

Mr Suhardi said Xanana expected to meet lawyers from the Legal Aid Foundation.

Xanana, 47, was shown but did not speak. Wearing a long beard, he appeared healthy and smiled when Mr Suhardi asked him whether he was happy in jail.

Mr Suhardi said Xanana spent his time drawing, painting and making furniture, which he sold.

Corrections officials lifted the suspension of Xanana's visiting rights yesterday. The suspension was put in place in early December following the publication of his letter to the International Commission of Jurists by Portuguese newspapers.

— AFP

Worried Jakarta denies killings

By LINDSAY MURDOCH,
South-East Asia correspondent,
Singapore, Sunday

Indonesia has strongly denied reports of a second round of killings in Dili after the 1991 massacre of East Timorese demonstrators, saying they are the invention of the anti-Indonesian resistance.

The Jakarta Government is worried that allegations about the killing of a further 50 to 200 Timorese, reported by the British film-maker Max Stahl, will damage efforts this year to negotiate an international settlement of the Timor issue.

Officials of the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs believe the release of a documentary, including the accounts of alleged Timorese survivors, is timed to cause maximum embarrassment to Jakarta in the lead-up to the United Nations Human Rights Commission meeting in Geneva which starts next week.

Mr Irawan Abidin, the director of information at the Indonesian Foreign Ministry, yesterday dismissed the report that scores of captured demonstrators were stabbed, poisoned or crushed to death at an Indonesian military hospital. "It never happened," he said.



Comment

MARK BAKER
POLITICAL EDITOR

Whether it was one massacre or two, the truth is that unspeakable atrocities have been committed.

PAGE 4.

Mr Irawan said the same claims were made in the days after the massacre outside Dili's Santa Cruz cemetery on 12 November 1991. He said they would serve only to damage the credibility of the Fretilin resistance.

"The allegations will not contribute to any solution to the problem of East Timor, especially at a time when Indonesia and Portugal have been having meetings to try to solve the problem."

Mr Stahl's accounts of people who said they survived the hospital killings were published in 'The Age' on Saturday and are to be detailed in a documentary to be televised in Britain on 22 February.

The documentary, called 'Death of a Nation', will be narrated by the controversial Australian journalist John Pilger. Mr Stahl and Mr Pilger visited East Timor last year despite restrictions on visits by foreign journalists. The documentary accuses Jakarta of genocide against the East Timorese since Indonesian troops occupied the territory in 1975.

It is expected to be shown at the UN Human Rights Commission which will discuss Indonesia's record on human rights.

The allegations come as Jakarta has been cooperating with stepped-up efforts to find an internationally acceptable solution to the East Timor issue. The United Nations still regards Portugal, which occupied the territory for 400 years, as the administering power.

But the UN Secretary-General, Dr Boutros Ghali, has arranged a series of meetings between Jakarta and Lisbon. The next is scheduled for May.

Australia's ambassador to Indonesia, Mr Allan Taylor, raised Mr Stahl's allegations in Jakarta yesterday during a meeting with the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Mr Ali Alatas.

Mr Taylor is believed to have told Mr Alatas that the Australian Government does not have evidence to support the allegations.

The Prime Minister, Mr Keating, said earlier that details of the events in Dili remained unclear.

"This was a very murky period and I don't think any of us profess to know the full details," he told journalists in Darwin. "There were still people missing, unaccounted for. But nor can we rely upon the reports that we have."

Mr Keating criticised Mr Pilger, who was a strong opponent of Australia's push to include the radical Khmer Rouge in a Cambodian peace settlement.

"I am afraid Mr Pilger's credibility is always under a cloud as his views about Cambodia last year revealed very starkly," Mr Keating said.

Continued: PAGE 4

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THE AGE MONDAY 14 FEBRUARY 1994

Worried Jakarta denies killings report

An official Indonesian inquiry found at least 30 people were killed in Dili when Indonesian troops opened fire on demonstrators. Some witnesses and other sources put the toll much higher.

The massacre, which was filmed by Mr Stahl, prompted some countries to cut aid to Indonesia temporarily.

Mr Irawan said that the situation in East Timor was not as bad

FROM PAGE ONE

as Fretilin and its supporters claimed.

He said this was proved during recent visits to East Timor by representatives of Indonesian and Portuguese friendship groups.

The Indonesian military claims that Fretilin, which has waged an armed struggle against Jakarta since 1975, has been virtually wiped out and that only a few dozen guerrillas remain in mountain hideouts.

Although foreign journalists have been banned from East Timor for at least six months, the Foreign Ministry has arranged for a group of about nine Jakarta-based correspondents to travel there tomorrow for a four-day visit.

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THE AGE MONDAY 14 FEBRUARY 1994



The UN says Indonesia has still to account for the Dili massacre.

One massacre or two, the

Indonesia's response to revelations of a second massacre in East Timor immediately after the November 1991 killings in and around Dili's Santa Cruz cemetery has been swift and predictable.

"It never happened," said the information director of the Foreign Ministry in Jakarta, Mr Irawan Abidin. It was, he said, just an invention of the East Timorese resistance to help promote their campaign for independence.

Comment

MARK BAKER

Mr Irawan's certainty sits uneasily with the fact that, more than two years after Indonesian troops opened fire, killing scores of unarmed protestors in Dili, his Government has failed to offer any explanation of what happened to the 66 people it acknowledges are missing, or the 273 that Timorese groups have documented as having disappeared.

That failure is central to the continuing international outcry about human rights abuses in Indonesia and to continuing United States sanctions against the Jakarta regime.

Last March the United Nations Human Rights Commission — in a resolution supported by the US and Australia — expressed strong concern "at the lack of information about the number of people killed on 12 November 1991 and

Timor atrocities are unspeakable

about the persons still unaccounted for".

The commission called on Indonesia to "account fully" for all those missing and to allow UN experts on torture, summary execution and arbitrary detention to be allowed to visit East Timor. A year later nothing has happened.

Witness accounts of a second massacre reported in this newspaper on Saturday support the widespread view among human rights groups that the fate of many, if not all of those missing, is explained by further secret and systematic killings by Indonesian security forces.

The witnesses told British documentary film-maker Max Stahl that scores of wounded prisoners were taken from the cemetery to a military hospital where they were stabbed to death, poisoned, crushed with big stones or run over by trucks.

Several months after the massacre, Mr Manuel Carrascalao, a member of the regional assembly and brother of the then Governor of East Timor, told a Jakarta magazine that he had seen soldiers at the cemetery killing wounded prisoners.

Indonesia's response to that allegation was consistent with the tactics of denial and cover-up that have characterised its actions since the massacre: it had the journalists responsible for the interview sacked.

Indonesia's international reputation continues to be mired by East Timor. Eighteen years after its bloody invasion, Jakarta continues to rule the former Portuguese territory by force.

Whether it was one massacre or two, the truth is that unspeakable atrocities have been committed. Until Jakarta accepts that, and recognises the need for reconciliation with and self-determination for the Timorese people, it will have no peace at home or in its international relationships.

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Dili priest rejects Pilger allegations

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and Stahl that wounded East Timorese were poisoned in hospital. Three of his own students were still missing more than two years after the shootings at the cemetery.

An official Indonesian inquiry convened by President Suharto found that about 50 people were killed on November 12, 1991. More than 60 people are still officially listed as missing.

Father Wanandi said he believed that about 90 people were killed at the Santa Cruz cemetery.

In their documentary to be released later this month, Pilger and Stahl claim that up to 200 survivors of the Dili shooting were later murdered in hospital.

Speaking from Jakarta, the Indonesian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Ali Alatas, called the Pilger allegations "fictitious and attention-grabbing".

"The story is too sensationalist and unbelievable. I doubt anyone will pay much attention to it," Mr Alatas said.

"These sensational new stories are aimed at attracting world attention on East Timor."

Mr Alatas acknowledged last month that Indonesia still had an international image problem where East Timor was concerned. He said this was largely due to the efforts of a small but vocal group of campaigners consisting of Fretilin remnants supported by certain non-government organisations of "doubtful credentials but strong political motivations".

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva is due to begin debating the East Timor issue later this month.

Indonesia annexed the former Portuguese colony in 1976 but the UN still recognises Portugal as the administering authority.

The Indonesian Government this week opened East Timor to visiting foreign journalists for the first time in nine months. Eight Jakarta-based foreign correspondents and one Singapore-based reporter arrived in Dili late on Tuesday for a two-day visit.

Faced with continuing international concern about the situation in East Timor, the Indonesian Government said it wanted to dispel the view that the province remained essentially closed to the foreign press.

While many Western observers believe that the heavy military presence in East Timor is slowly lifting, visiting journalists are not allowed to travel freely throughout the province. Permission to visit and film the Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili was denied yesterday by Indonesian authorities. No reason was given.

Dili priest rejects Pilger murder claims



By PATRICK WALTERS in Dili

ONE of East Timor's most prominent Catholic priests has rejected claims that injured survivors of the 1991 Dili shootings were later murdered in a military hospital.

Father Marcus Wanandi, a Jesuit priest and principal of St Josephs College High School in Dili, said yesterday he could not agree with the claims made by Australian journalist John Pilger and British film-maker Max Stahl in a new film they have made on East Timor.

"I don't agree. I saw it with my own eyes. Eleven of my students were in the military hospital at that time," Father Wanandi told visiting journalists yesterday.

Father Wanandi, who witnessed the mass shooting of civilians by Indonesian armed forces outside the Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili on November 12, 1991, said he visited the Wirhusada Military Hospital less than two hours after the incident and paid daily visits to the hospital in succeeding weeks.

He also said he did not believe claims made by Pilger

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Troop presence in East Timor can be slashed, says governor

By PATRICK WALTERS in Dili



A MUCH improved security situation in East Timor should allow a significant reduction in the number of army personnel stationed in the province, the Governor of East Timor, Mr Abilio Soares, said yesterday.

Mr Soares said he believed the number of Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI) battalions could be decreased from the present level of seven to as few as two within two years.

Ever since Indonesia annexed the former Portuguese colony of East Timor in 1976, Jakarta has permanently stationed thousands of troops in the province to counter the armed rebellion by Fretilin guerillas.

In recent years the Government has gradually reduced the number of combat battalions based in East Timor as it has managed to isolate remaining Fretlin supporters more effectively.

Mr Soares said ABRI now had only one combat battalion stationed in East Timor and six additional territorial battalions mainly engaged in civil construction work.

"The situation here is quiet at the moment. Fretilin is a leaderless organisation. There are no disturbances," he said.

ABRI has estimated the number of remaining Fretilin guerillas at fewer than 100.

Mr Soares said he had had contact by letter with seven Fretilin members in recent months, two of whom had decided to come down from the mountains on the assurance that they would not suffer any reprisal.

The Governor denied that human rights abuses continued to occur in East Timor, saying no one was now arrested without proper legal procedures.

"The situation regarding human rights is very good at the moment. Some people may say there is a problem. They are people who want to politicise the issue," he said.

Mr Soares acknowledged that East Timor's high rate of youth unemployment posed a significant problem for the Government.

Government officials estimate that 45 per cent of East Timor's working population are unemployed or underemployed.

Mr Soares said East Timor faced a big problem in developing new industries in the province to generate jobs.

An ongoing program of road building and other infrastructure work was continuing to assist the unemployment problem.

While he dismissed any idea of some kind of political autonomy for East Timor, Mr Soares said there was no question that the province was already receiving special treatment as far as its future development was concerned.

The development budget alone for the last financial year totalled about $US130 million ($183 million).

● The United States yesterday said it would suspend but not end its formal review of Indonesia's worker rights, citing improvements in conditions.

Human rights monitor Asia Watch criticised the decision, saying it sent contradictory signals.

Landslides delay quake relief

By DEAN YATES in Liwa

LANDSLIDES hampered relief efforts yesterday for this remote town in a mountainous region of the Indonesian island of Sumatra where a strong earthquake killed at least 131 people and injured 1000.

Shortly after midnight last night, 24 hours after the quake measuring at least 6.5 on the Richter scale hit Liwa, there was little sign of relief apart from five helicopters.

"Help is on the way but it is very difficult because transport is hampered by landslide debris covering bridges and roads," a provincial official in Bandar Lampung, 120km from here, Mr Bambang Suprianto, said.

Officials in Liwa, a town of up to 100,000 where thousands of vacant-eyed refugees spent the night huddled by the roadside and in makeshift camps, said civilian and military relief teams were expected to arrive early today.

The damage to Liwa was almost total. Houses made of brick or wood caved in when most people were sleeping and little except battered roofs covered piles of rubble.

"We will make an assessment of the damage and see what we are up against," army Colonel Muslihan said in Liwa, where several aftershocks stirred fresh fears.

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THE AGE

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Indonesia vows more East Timor troop cuts

Dili, Thursday

The Indonesian-appointed governor of East Timor said today that he hoped to halve the number of troops in the disputed territory within a year or two.

Mr Abilio Soares said the number of 650-strong battalions had already been cut from 10 to seven and only one was equipped for combat. The others were territorial, or engineering, battalions.

"When I don't need the territorial battalions any more, I may just have three battalions consisting of East Timorese . . . because after territorial battalions we need only police, actually," Mr Soares told a group of foreign journalists.

His remarks, made during the first permitted visit by foreign journalists to the former Portuguese colony in nine months, appeared to confirm promises by then-military commander Major General Theo Syafei last year that Indonesia hoped to reduce the garrison to two battalions.

Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1975, after its colonial rulers departed, and annexed it in 1976 in a move resisted by a dwindling band of guerrillas and not recognised by the United Nations.

Mr Soares said military activity had remained minimal in recent years, with the Fretilin guerrillas reduced to fewer than 100 members.

"The situation especially in the last three to four years has been very good. There have not been any reports of attacks from the (guerrillas). Their group is not organised because they lack a leader," he said.

PILITA CLARK reports from Washington that the Clinton administration yesterday gave Indonesia a six-month reprieve from its threat to impose economic penalties unless Jakarta improved its worker rights record.

The administration had been expected to announce yesterday the results of a review started in 1992 of Indonesia's treatment of workers.

Instead, the US Trade Representative, Mr Mickey Kantor, said the administration was suspending its review to give the Indonesian Government "more time to implement recently adopted labor regulations, and to take further actions in the worker rights area". — **Reuter**